



# ADVOCACY NEWS ADVOCACY ACTION

## ***Political Climate Change***

*by Joe Nadglowski*

In November 2010, the political climate of the U.S. government once again changed. Some experts have stated that this type of change between political parties will continue for years to come. One question that we've received a lot at the OAC is, "What does this mean for me and the relationships I've built with my elected official?" That's an excellent question.

### **FORM NEW RELATIONSHIPS**

When the country is in an ever-changing political climate, advocates can quickly become frustrated with the constant change in political climate; however, there is a silver lining in this climate change. Many of you may have taken the past two years to build solid relationships with your elected officials, but now find yourselves at the starting point again. Well, this is actually a good thing.

One of the most important parts of being an advocate is raising awareness of the disease of obesity and the obstacles faced by many when trying to access safe and effective treatment options. You see, for many of us, if we're asked a question about obesity or the struggles we've faced, we can instantly provide an answer; however, there are still many individuals in the public, such as your newly-elected official, who are not familiar with obesity or its struggles and barriers. That is why it is important for you to take the time and begin forming new relationships with these elected officials.

### **FINDING YOUR NEWLY-ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Some of you probably knew your representative's phone number or email by heart; however, with change, comes a learning curve. Finding your new representative's contact information is simple. Located on the OAC's Web site in the "Advocacy Tools" section, you will find the "Legislative Action Center." In this section, you can simply type in your zip code and click "Go." Within seconds, you'll see a variety of categories, such as "President," "Senator," "Governor," "Representatives" and much more.

Under each of these sections, you'll find the name of your elected officials. Each name is hyperlinked and when clicked, you'll be directed to a new page listing this individual's

contact information. It's that simple. To find your elected official on the OAC's Legislative Action Center, visit [capwiz.com/obesityaction/dbq/officials](http://capwiz.com/obesityaction/dbq/officials).

### **WHAT IF MY OFFICIAL DID NOT CHANGE?**

Okay, so your elected officials managed to avoid the sweeping changes in November (or maybe they just weren't up for re-election) and now you may be thinking to yourself, "I already contacted them, so I don't have to anymore." Yes you do, and here's why.

Elected officials are contacted by thousands of individuals each day and most of those contacts are advocating for something, such as healthcare, state projects and much more. Re-introducing yourself to an old friend is a good idea. Update them on your health, any progress you've made or any obstacles you've faced. It is very important to keep an open line of communication with your elected official.

### **WHAT TO SAY**

OAC members contact the OAC daily asking for advice on what to write to their elected official. The best answer we provide is – be yourself. Often times, sharing your personal story with your elected official is the most powerful thing you can do. Remember, especially for the newly-elected officials, YOU are a constituent and they are there to serve YOU. It is important for officials to know what your needs are.

For those of you still hesitant to get started, we've created a great section on our Web site to help you start advocating today! To view this section on the OAC Web site, visit [www.obesityaction.org/advocacy/gettingstarted.php](http://www.obesityaction.org/advocacy/gettingstarted.php)

### **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

Building a relationship with your newly-elected official or reconnecting with your current one is an excellent way to raise awareness of the disease of obesity. Share your story and advocate for change. It is our job, as a Coalition, to educate those around us especially our elected officials. With their unique positions, they have the power to help those who need it the most, but first, they need the knowledge and that is where YOU can make a difference.



# ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

## LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

### Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
  - Community Discussion Forum
  - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



**JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](http://OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN)**

[info@obesityaction.org](mailto:info@obesityaction.org)

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



@ObesityActionCoalition

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